

Ursuline Academy, 1872 House
300 Augusta Street
San Antonio
Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TX-32-F

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

URSULINE ACADEMY, 1872 HOUSE

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Location: 300 Augusta Street, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Present Owner: Link Cowen.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Significance: This building, a part of the Ursuline Academy complex and one of seven surviving buildings, is a good example of the plain style of residential stone masonry architecture to be found in this area during the third quarter of the 19th century. It is devoid of stylistic details.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Between August 1, 1872 and November 1, 1872.
2. Architect: John Campbell, who also served as builder.
3. Original and subsequent owners: See History section of the Ursuline Academy, HABS No. TX-32.
5. Original plans and construction: The following is the building contract dated August 3, 1872:

" John Campbell, architect and builder to put up a building of hard stone, two stories high and about 47 by 21 feet. The first story will have six doors and two windows. Second story, seven windows and one door according to the plan signed; also a ventilator in both gable ends. To furnish good materials and Leon sand; to make two flues without extra charge; to make good building, filling well the spaces in the middle of the walls and to lay the stones in rubble work; the openings and corners to be made with good solid rock and the stones to be laid as in the quarry bed. Jambs of the doors and windows to be hammer dressed. Over the stone lintels (which will not be less than 1 foot thick) of all openings, will be placed two stones forming an arch. Also to furnish scaffolding and tools and to finish said work in three months from the 1st of August. To be paid \$4.50 per perch according to the usual measure. Also an extra sum of \$3.00 for each of the stone lintels for the openings."

By its design it is evident that the building was intended as a residence but for what actual purpose is unknown.

- B. Historical Context: See History section of the Ursuline Academy, HABS No. TX-32, for general history of the Academy.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a simple stone rectangle with a one-story gallery on its north facade. It is attached to the east end of the Laundry Building and is located in the rear part of the complex.
2. Condition of fabric: Because of neglect by the present owner, the windows and doors are in a poor state of repair, most broken in; the interior has been severely abused. The walls are essentially sound, but mortar joints are in need of rejoining. The porch is in poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: 21' x 47' excluding porch.
2. Foundation: Rubble limestone laid in lime mortar.
3. Walls: Rubble limestone laid in mortar with openings and corners of dressed ashlar. Stone is of local origin: the common, soft, yellow limestone so abundant in central Texas.

The lower floor at the north elevation is plastered and has a light sandy brown finish.

4. Structural system, system: Load bearing masonry walls. Interior partitions: wood frame with the exception of east wall of lower west room which is masonry. Roof and floor systems: typical wood construction of joists and rafters.
5. Porches: Wood framed, one-story porch across the north facade. Paving: a mixture of stone, brick and concrete.
6. Chimneys: Red brick, integral with masonry walls--one centered on ridge; one on east end, south slope.
7. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: All exterior openings are constructed like those of the 1866-1870 Dormitory building, with an ashlar limestone lintel spanning the opening and a simple relieving arch of two ashlar stones superimposed above.

There are five exterior doorways: one on the north facade, lower floor, with wood door, six lights over two molded panels, plain wood trim; one in the east facade, lower floor, with a double wood door, each with six lights over two molded

panels; two on the south facade, lower floor, one centered, the other in center of western half, both doors with six lights over two molded panels, the westernmost having in addition a single light glass transom; one on west facade, lower floor.

- b. Windows and shutters: 6/6 light, double-hung, wood sash. Louvered shutters are used.

8. Roof: Gable roof with standing-seam, metal covering.

C. Description of Interior:

- 1. Floor plan: The plan is the standard central hall flanked by one room on each side. The second floor is the same except for frame partitions running east to west that divide the west room into two equal sized spaces and the east room into one large room and one smaller room.

This plan is an alteration of the original, for the stair has been relocated from its original position on the north wall just east of the center doorway to its present central position on the west hall wall.

- 2. Stairway: Plain wood staircase; turned balusters and newel.
- 3. Flooring: Ground floor: concrete. Upper floor: tongue-and-groove wood.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Walls: plaster. Ceilings: originally wood, tongue-and-groove.
- 5. Doors: Four-panel type with some two-panel replacements; plain wood trim.
- 6. Mechanical equipment:
 - a. Heating: Originally fireplaces.
 - b. Lighting: Electric fixtures.

D. Site:

- 1. General setting and orientation: The axis of the house is east to west. The principal facade faces north. The building is separated from busy St. Mary's Street by a high stone wall and gravel drive. The area immediately in front of or north of the house is asphalted and used as a parking lot.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director, Bexar County Architecture Survey
December 13, 1968

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1968, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, Chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermsen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Academy buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., Director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress. Dewey G. Mears of Austin, Texas took the photographs of the San Antonio structures.